

3. And then if the King should license, or command us to Preach, Pray, and Communicate, and the Bishop forbid it, it were sin. But that I will not believe, unless the *Cause*, more than the *Authority*, make the difference.

To conclude, I hold, that *just use of the Keys* is very necessary, and that it is the great sin of *England* to reject it: But that a *false usurped use of excommunication* hath been the incendiary of the Christian world, which hath broken it to pieces, caused horrid Schisms, Rebellions, Treasons, Murders, and bloody Wars.

I. The just use is, 1. When a scandalous or great sinner is with convincing evidence told of his error, and with seriousness, yet with love and compassion, intreated to repent, and either prevailed with, and so absolved, or after due patience, Authoritatively pronounced incapable of Church-Communion, and bound over to answer it at the Bar of Christ, in terror if he repent not, and this by the Pastor of that particular Church, which either stately, or *pro tempore*, he belongeth to.

2. And when this is duly notified to such Neighbour-Pastors as he may seek Communion with, and they agree not to receive any justly cast out by others, but to receive and relieve the injured and falsely condemned.

3. And when the King and his Justices, permit not the ejected violently to intrude, and take the Sacrament, or joyn with the Church by force, but preserveth forcibly the Peace and Privileges of the Churches.

II. The excommunication that hath turned the Church into Factions, and undone almost *East* and *West*, is, 1. When a Bishop, because of his humane Superiory, as Patriark, Primate, or Pope, claimeth the power of excommunicating *other Bishops*, as his Subjects, whose Sentence must stand because of his Regent power.

2. Or at least, gathering a Council where he shall preside, and that Council shall take themselves to have a Governing power of the Keys over the particular Bishop, not only to renounce Communion with them themselves, but to oblige all others to stand to their judicial Sentence. 3. When Bishops shall meddle cautelessly in other Bishops Churches, and make themselves Judges either of distant, unknown persons, and cases, or of such as they have nothing to do to try. Yea, judg men of other

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Countries, or so distant, as the Witnesses and Causes cannot without oppression be brought to their Bar.

4. When they disgrace Gods universal Laws of Communion, as insufficient, and make a multitude of unnecessary, ensnaring, dividing Laws of their own, according to which they must be mens Judges.

5. When these Laws are not made only for their own flocks and selves, but for all the Christian world, or for absent, or dissenting persons.

6. When men excommunicate others for *hard words*, not understood, that deserve it not as to real matter.

7. Or do it to keep up an unlawful usurped power over those Churches that never consented to take them for their Pastors, and to rule where they have no true Authority but such as standeth on a forcing strength.

8. When Lay-Chancellors use the Keys of the Church.

9. When men excommunicate others wickedly, for doing their duty to God and man, or unjustly without sufficient Cause.

10. When unjust excommunicators force Ministers against their Consciences to publish their condemnations against those that they know to be not worthy of that Sentence, if not the best of their flocks.

11. And when they damn all as Hereticks, Schismatics, &c. that communicate with any that they thus unjustly damn.

12. When they dishonour Kings, and higher Powers, by disgracing excommunications; much more when they depose them.

13. When they tell Princes, that it is their duty to banish, imprison or destroy men, because excommunicate, and not reconciled; and make Kings their Executioners. And so of old, when a Bishop was excommunicate, he must presently be banished: And they say, the *Scots* horning is of the same nature. If all had been either banished, or imprisoned, that were excommunicate, and unreconciled in the pursuit of the General Councils of old, how great a diminution would it have made of the free Subjects of the Empire? And if Princes must strike with the Sword, all that stand excommunicate, without trying, and judging the persons themselves, it is no wonder if such Prelates, as can first so debase them to be their Lictors, can next depose them. He is like to be a great Persecuter, that will imprison or banish all that a proud contentious Clergy will excommunicate.

As *corruptio optimi est pessima*, I doubt not but a wise, humble, holy, spiritual, loving, heavenly, zealous, patient, exemplary sort of Pastors is the means of continuing Christs Kingdom in the World, and such are the *Pillars* and *Basis* of Truth in the House of God (as it is said of *Timothy*, not of the Church as is commonly mistaken). So an ignorant, worldly, carnal, proud, usurping, domineering, hypocritical sort of Pastors, have been the great plagues, and causes of Schism, confusion, and common calamity: And that when Satan can be the chuser of Pastors for Christs Church, he will (and too oft hath) ever chuse such as shall most successfully serve him in Christs Name.

And I doubt not, but such holy Discipline, as shall keep clean the Church of Christ, and keep off the reproach of wickedness and uncleanness from the Christian Religion, and manifest duly to the flock the difference between the precious and the vile, is a great Ordinance of God (which one man cannot exercise over many hundred Parishes, and unknown people). But an usurped domineering use of excommunication, to subdue Kings, Princes, Nobles, and people to the Jurisdiction, Opinions, and Canons of Popes, Patriarchs, Prelates, or their Councils, I think hath done not the least part of Satans work in the world.

And I must tell you, that I have lived now near 62. (now near 66.) years, and I never saw one man or woman reformed or converted by excommunication (and I hope I have known thousands converted from their sin by Preaching, even by some that are now forbidden to Preach). All that ever I knew excommunicate, were of two sorts. 1. Dissenters from the Opinions of the Bishops, or conscientious refusers of their commands: And these all rejoice in their sufferings, applying, *Blessed are ye, when they cast out your names, &c. say all evil of you falsely, &c.* or they take their censure for wicked persecution. The Papists laugh at their Excommunicators, and say, What an odd conditioned Church have you, that will cast us out that never came in, and because we will not come in? 2. Ungodly impenitent sinners: And these hate the excommunicators for disgracing them, and are driven further off from godliness than before: But they will say, *they repent* at any time, rather than go to the Gaol. I never saw one person brought to publick confession in the Assembly, by the Bishops Discipline; but I heard
when

I was young, of one, or two, that for Adultery stood in a White Sheet in the Church, laughing at the sport, or hating the imposers. When there were no Bishops among us, about 1650. many Episcopal, Presbyterians, &c. agreed, where I lived, to exercise so much Discipline, as we were all agreed belonged to Presbyters. Hereupon I found good success, in bringing some to repentance by admonition, but never of any one that stood it out to an excommunication (so far as we went, which was only to admonish, and pray for their repentance publicly, and after to declare them unmeet for Christian Communion, and to require the people to avoid them accordingly, till they repent). After this they hated us more than before (and one of them laid hands on me in the Church-Yard, to have killed me). And I am sure that they revered those Ministers more than now Lay-Chancellors (if not Bishops) are by such revered: So that experience convinced me, that the penalty of excommunication is much more beneficial to others, than to the excommunicate.

And how many thousands in your Parish do now voluntarily excommunicate themselves from the Sacrament, and Church-Assemblies, and find no Remorse, or Reformation by it? And if all of both sorts (conscientious Dissenters, and prophane despisers, and sinners) were excommunicated now by the Church of England, without any corporal penalty adjoyned, what do you think it would do upon them? Would they not laugh at you, or pity you? Do not the Bishops believe this, and therefore will not trust to their excommunications at all without the Sword?

I cannot magnifie the Discipline of such men as count themselves the Power of the Keys to be but a Leaden Sword, a vain thing, without the annexed enforcement of corporal penalties: If it be but *outward obedience to their commands*, which they drive men to, without the heart,

1. Men of no Conscience will soonest obey them, as forced against their Consciences.

2. And why do they abuse the name of the Keys, as if it were the cause of that which it is no cause of, but is done only by the Magistrates Sword? It is the Writ *De excom. cap.* that doth it, and not the Keys. And they that think *unwilling persons* have right to the great benefit of Church Communion;

yea,

yea, all that had rather come to Church than lie in Gaol, shall never have my assent.

If really your meaning be to set up the power of the Keys by themselves, to do their proper work, and not expect that Magistrates must joyn their forcing power, to punish a man meerly because he beareth the Bishops punishment patiently, without changing his mind; Let it prevail as far as it can prevail; who will fear it (save for the Schism that it may cause)? But if it be your meaning all this while, that under the name of *denying* the Sacrament, it is Confiscation or the Gaol that must do the work, I should wish for more of the Spirit of Christianity, and less inclination to the Inquisition-way. Persecution never yet escaped its due odium, or penalty, by disowning its proper name. I am more of St. *Martin's* mind than of *Ithacius's*.

V. One word more I add, That I like not your making so light as you seem to me to do, of the *badness* of some *Ministers* and *People* that are in the allowed Churches. I know that the Papists speak much of the holiness of a Pope, when perhaps a General Council saith, he is a Murderer, Adulterer, Heretick, &c. and so call their Church *Relatively* holy. I deny not that *Relative holiness*, which is founded in meer profession: But I believe, that Christ came to gather a people to another sort of *Godliness*, and by his Spirit to fill them with Divine and Heavenly *Life, Light, and Love* (to God and man). And I believe, that all that have this (though excommunicate) shall be glorified: And that without this, all the obedience to Bishops that they give, will never keep them out of Hell. And I take it to be no great priviledg to march in an orderly Army to damnation, or to be at peace in Satans power. Hell will be Hell which way ever we come to it. I confess, were these Bishops in the right, that *Sancta Clara* citeth, that say, *The ignorant people might merit by hating God, as an act of obedience, if their Pastors should tell them it is their duty*; then this external obedience to them were more considerable: But I had rather go in the Company that goeth to Heaven (as all do that are true Lovers of God and man) than in that which goeth to Hell (as do the most Regular of the ungodly). And yet I account true obedience, and regularity, a great duty of the godly, and a great help to godliness.

And therefore I value the *Means* for the *End*, *Concord* for *Piety* and *salvation*. And I cannot think, that there is not now in *London*, a very laudable degree of Concord among all those that, though in different Assemblies, and with difference of opinions about small matters, do hold one Body, one Spirit, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one Celestial hope, and one God and Father of all, and live in Love, and Peace and Patience towards each other: This is far greater Concord than the thousands of people, that deserving excommunication for their wicked lives, do hold in the bosom of the Church, which receiveth them as children thereof. And O! were it not for that uncharitable impatience, which an ill selfish Spirit doth contain, why should it seem to us a matter of such *odium*, envy, or out-cry, for men to hear the same Gospel from another man, which for some differing opinion they will not hear from us? Or for men to communicate, *e. g.* standing, or sitting in a Congregation of that mind, that (weakly) scruple to kneel at it with others (the old Canons countenancing their gesture of standing, more than kneeling) What harm will it do me, if (under the strictest Laws of Peace) men worshipped God by themselves, that scruple some *word*, or *action* in our worship? *E. g.* a *Nestorian* that should think, that it is improper to say, that the *Virgin Mary* was *Dei Genes*, and that the denomination should be a *ratione formali*, rather than a *materiali*: Would Liberty in such matters, with Love and Peace, do more hurt to the Churches than Schismatical excommunications have done?

And indeed it is hard to make people able to reconcile a Con-junct earnestness, in driving the same men *into the Church*, and *casting them out*; yea, of excommunicating them, *ipso facto*, by divers Canons (*sine sententia*), and accusing them for not communicating. If it be for *not repenting*, 1. Can you bring all the sinners about us to repentance, by excommunications? Why then are the openly wicked so numerous? 2. Do you think men can change their judgment, meerly because they are commanded, or excommunicated? If a man study, and pray, and endeavour to the utmost, to know the truth, and you say, that yet he erreth, will a censure cure his understanding? *E. g.* a *Nestorian*, a *Monotheite*, an *Anabaptist*, &c. much less when a man knoweth that he is in the right, and the censurer fighteth against truth and duty.

Men in some diseases will rage at the sight of certain things, which would not much trouble them, if the disease were cured. *Macedonius*, and *Nestorius*, that were judged Hereticks themselves, could not bear the Bishops, and meetings of the *Novatians*; But *Atticus* could, and they lived together in Christian Love. I know those places now in *England*, where a Conformable and Nonconformable Minister, live in so great love, and the latter go still to the Parish-Churches, and the former sometimes come to them, as that no considerable trouble ariseth by their difference: And I know other places, where the publick Ministers cannot bear any that hear not themselves, yea, or that constantly hearing them, hear any other that dissenteth. But they seek to win Dissenters, as Fowlers would bring Birds to the Net, by shewing, and throwing stones at them; and Anglers would catch Fish, by beating the Waters.

VI. I will tell you also, that I much dissent from you, in that when I told you, *that the Tyranny of Prelates hath done more hurt than the disobedience and discord of the People towards them*, you said, *you do not think so*.

Qu. Do you think that Thieves have killed as many men as Wars have done? If it be true, that *Julius Caesar*, and his Armies killed 1192000. persons, besides those that he slew in the Civil Wars. That *Darius* lost at once 200 000, and abundance of such instances in lower degrees may be given; sure poor Thieves and Murderers come far short of this account. And so it is in the present case. *Gregory Nazian.* was a wise, and good man, who saith, the people were factious, and too unruly, but (at *Const.*) were honest, and meant well. But how sadly doth he describe the Bishops, as raging even in their Councils, and as the far greater causes of all calamity! Judg by the Twenty instances that I before gave you, about their excommunication: How few Heresies, or Schisms, were there of old, that the Bishops were not the notorious causes of? The *Samosatinians*, *Apollinarians*, *Macedonians*, *Nestorians*, *Acephali*, the *Monothelites*, yea, the *Donatists*, *Novatians*, the *Phantasticks*, and almost all: The *Arrians* began by a Presbyter; but if *Petavius* cites them truly (as he doth) too many Bishops led him the way, and most of the Bishops followed, and were the men that kept up, and increased the Heresie, far beyond the people, or the Presbyters. *Eutychus*, a Monk, began his Cause; but he was quickly contemned by his followers, and did little.

little in comparison of *Dioscorus*, *Severus*, and many hundred more Bishops.

And is it the *People*, or the *Bishops*, that now keep *East* and *West* in mutual damnations? Have the *Peoples* divisions done more harm than the *Papal Schism*, and *Ulrpations*, and *Cruelties*, killing about 2000000. as is said of *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*, the *Inquisitions*, bloody *Wars* against the *Germane* Emperors, and many *English* Kings, the *Rebellion* against the *Greek* Emperor, *Leo Isaurus*, and destruction of the *Eastern* Empire, our *Smithfield* Bone-fires, and innumerable other *Cruelties*, *Desolations*, *Heresies* and *Schisms*? Are all these less than the abuse of *Liberty* by *Inferiors*, in *Praying*, *Preaching*, or *Disorders*? Judg *Hale* saith, *That he had a friend that stored a very great Pond of Three or Four Acres, with a great number of Fish, and at Seven years end only put in Two very small Pikes, and at the draught of his Pond, there was not one Fish left, but the Two Pikes grown to an excessive bigness, and all the rest with their millions of fry devoured by the pair of Tyrants.* *Hale of the Orig. of Man, Sect. 2. cap. 9. pag. 208.* The *Block* had been a better *Ruler*. The *Lord* forgive the *Presbyterians* their over-keenness against *Sects*, before the *Pikes* have made an end of them. Pardon truth to

Your Servant,

Ri. Baxter.

For the Learned Mr. Henry Dowell (after a personal Conference with him).

S I R,

Concord and Peace are so very desirable to the ends of Christianity, that I am glad to hear you speak for them in the general, though I take your way to be certainly destructive of them; and because you think the like of mine, and so while we are agreed for the end, we greatly differ about the means, I shall here perform what I last offered you, viz. 1. An explanation

tion of my own sense of the way of Church-concord (because you said I am still upon the destructive part) viz. 1. My fundamental Principles. 2. The way of concord, which I suppose to be sufficient, and only likely (as appointed by God) to attain that end. II. The reasons of my utter dissent from your way. III. A Proposal for our further debating of these differences.

I. I hope if you are a man of charity or impartiality, it will be no hard matter to you to believe that I am willing to be acquainted with healing truth (that I say not as willing as you); and if I be unhappy in the success of my Enquiries, it is not for want of searching diligence. And your parts assure me, that it is so with you. But it is the usual effect of one received error, to let in many more; and it is so either with me or you. And lest it should prove my unhappiness, I shall thankfully accept your remedying informations.

1. The Principles which I presuppose, are such as these. 01. As God as Creator, so Christ as Redeemer is the Universal King and Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, *Ephes. 1. 22, 23. Joh. 17. 2, &c.*

2. He hath made *Universal Laws* to be means of this Universal Government.

3. His Universal Laws are in *suo genere* sufficient to their proper use.

4. There is no other Universal King or Ruler of the world, or of the Church, whether Personal or Collective. And therefore none that hath power of Universal Legislation, or Jurisdiction.

5. Much less any that hath a superiour power to alter Gods Universal Laws by abrogation, subrogation, suspension, or dispensation. Nor will God himself alter them, and substitute new ones. As *Tertullian* saith, *We at first believe this, that no more is to be believed.*

6. These Laws of our Universal Governour are partly of natural Revelation, and partly of Supernatural, viz. by himself, and by his Spirit in his Apostles given in an extraordinary measure to this end, to lead them into all truth, which is delivered to us in their Scripture-records.

7. Some local precepts, whose matter was narrow and temporary.

rary, even the mutable customs of that time and place were also narrow and temporary ; (as the washing of feet, anointing, vailing women, the kifs of peace, &c) which maketh nothing for the mutability of the Universal Laws.

8. No Pastors since the Apostles, are by office or power appointed to make any Universal Laws for the Church, nor any of the same kind and reason with Gods own Laws, whose reason or cause was existent in the Apostles times, but only to explain the word of God, and apply it to particular persons and cases, as Ministers under Christ in his Teaching, Priestly and Governing office; nor have the Apostles any other kind of Successors.

9. Christ made not *Peter* or any one of his Apostles Governor of the rest: But when they strove who should be the chief, rebuked that expectation, and determined, That among them Preeminence should consist in excelling in humility and service.

10. When the *Corinthians* were sick of the like disease, *Paul* rebuked them for saying, *I am of Cephas*, and determineth that Apostles are but particular members of the body, of which Christ only is the Head; and not the Lords, but Ministers and helpers of their faith.

11. No Pastors (as such) have forcing power, either to touch mens bodies, or estates, or inflict by the sword corporal penalties, or mulcts. But only by the word (by which the power of the Keys is exercised) to instruct men, and urge Gods precepts, promises and threats upon their Consciences.

12. The Apostles were Bishops *eminenter*, in that they called, gathered, and while they stayed with them, governed Churches. But not *formaliter* as taking any one particular Church for their proper charge: But settled such fixed Bishops over them. And though they distributed their labours about the world prudently, and as the Spirit of Christ guided them; yet we find not any probability that ever they divided the world into twelve or thirteen Provinces, or ever settled twelve or thirteen chief Metropolitans in the world, which their proper Successors as such should govern in preeminence. Nor doth any History intimate such a thing; nor yet that any Apostle took any City for his proper Diocese, where another Apostle might not come and exercise equal Power.

13. It seemeth that Christs sending out his seventy Disciples by two and two, and the Apostles staying together much at *Jerusalem*, and *Paul* and *Barnabas*'s going forth together, and after *Paul* & *Silas*, and *Barnabas* and *Mark*, & *Peter* and *Paul* (supposed) to be together at *Rome*, &c. that the Spirit of God did purposely prevent the intentions of any afterward of being the Metropolitall Successors of single Apostles or Disciples of Christs immediate sending, in this or that City as their proper seat.

14. As *Grotius* thinks that the Churches were instituted after the likeness of the Synagogues, of which one City had many; so *Dr. Hammond* endeavours to evince, not only that *Peter* and *Paul* were Bishops of two distinct Churches of *Rome*, one of the *Jews*, and the other of the Gentile Christians; but also that it was so in other Cities. *Dissertat.*

15. The Patriarchs were not 12 or 13, but three first, and five afterward; and none of them pretended to any power as especial Successors of any one Apostle, but *Antioch* and *Rome* of *Peter*; (and that was not their first claim or title, but an honorary reason why men afterward advanced them.) *Alexandria* claimed Succession but from *St. Mark*, and *Jerusalem* from *James* (no Apostle, if *Dr. Hammond* and others be not much mistaken) and *Constantinople* from none.

16. The 28 Canon of *Calcedon* tells us enough of the foundation, title and reason of Patriarchal power, and all Church-History that the Metropolitall Powers were granted by Emperours, either immediately, or empowering Councils thereto.

17. These Emperours having no power out of the Empire, neither by themselves, nor by Councils, gave not any power that extended further than the Empire, or that could by that title continue to any City which fell under the Government of another Prince.

18. A there never was a Council truly Universal, so the name *Universal* or *Oecumenical* was not of old given them, in respect to the whole *Christian world*, but to the whole Empire; as the power that called them, and the names of the Bishops subscribed, &c. fully prove.

19. Before Christian Princes did empower them, Councils were but for *Counsel*, *concord* and *correspondency*, and *particular Pastors* were bound by their Decrees only: 1. For the evidence of truth which they made known: 2. And by the *General Law*

of God, to maintain unity and peace, and help each other. But afterward, by vertue of the Princes Law, or Will, they exercised a direct Government over the particular Bishops, and those were oft banished that did not submit to them.

20. While Councils met but for *Counsel* and *Concord*, and also when afterwards they were but *Provincial*, or *National* under Kings, where none of the *Patriarchal Spirit* and *Interest* did corrupt them, they made excellent Orders, and were a great blessing to the Churches: Of the first sort, *e. g.* were divers *African*, and of the latter divers *Spanish*, and *French*, when neither Emperor, nor Pope, did over-rule them, but the *Gothish*, and *French* Kings moderately govern them. But though I deny not any good which the Councils, called General, did, especially the first *Nicene*; yet I must profess, that the History of the Patriarchal Seats, and the History of the General Councils, and the Church-Wars then, and after them managed by Four of the Patriarchs especially, and their Bishops, the confusion caused in most of the Churches, the Anathematizing of one another, the blood that hath been shed in the open streets, of Monks, and common people; yea, the fighting, and fury of Bishops at the Councils, to the death of some of them, their tiring out the endeavours of such Emperors, and their Officers, that would have kept Peace and Concord among them, do all put me out of hope, that the Peace and Concord of the Christian world, should ever be settled by Popes, Patriarchs, or such kind of *Councils*, which all have so long filled the Christian world with most calamitous divisions, contentions, and blood-shed, and made the snares, which continue its divisions and distractions to this day.

II. I conceive, that the means of Church-concord, appointed by God, is as follows. But I premise,

1. It must be pre-supposed, That no perfect Concord will be had on earth; yea, that there will unavoidably be very many differences, which must be born. So great is the diversity of mens natural Capacity and Temper, their Education, Company, Teachers, Helps, Interests, Callings, Temptations, &c. that it is not probable that any Two men in all the world, are
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in every particular of the same mind : And every man that groweth in knowledg, will more and more differ from himself, and not be of the same mind as he was when he knew less.

2. Yet must our increase in knowledg, and Concord, be our continual endeavour ; and it is the use of teaching to bring these differences, caused by ignorance, to as small a number as we can.

3. There is scarce a more effectual means of Division, and Confusion, and Church-ruin, to be devised, than to suppose a more extensive Concord to be possible, and necessary, than indeed is ; and so to set up an impossible End, and Means, and to deny Concord and Peace to all that cannot have it on those terms. If all should be denied to be the Kings Subjects, who dare not profess Assent, Consent, and approbation of *every law*, and *part*, or *word* of the laws, or that agree not of the *meaning* of every law, or that differ in any matters of Religion, what a Schism, Confusion, and Ruine would it unavoidably make in the Kingdom ? and how few Subjects would it leave the King ? Even as if none but men of the same stature, visage, or wit, should be Subjects.

4. The necessary Union and Concord of Christians, is a matter of so great importance, that it cannot be supposed, that Christ is the sole Universal Lawgiver, and yet hath not ordained, or determined what shall be the terms of necessary Christian Unity and Concord : And indeed he hath determined it. *Viz.*

I. He hath ordained Baptism himself, to be our Christning, or our visible Investiture in the Church Universal ; that is, our Relation to Christ, as the Head of his Universal Kingdom, or Body. And every rightfully baptized person (till by violating that Covenant he forfeit his benefits), is to be taken by us as a Member of Christ, a Child of God, and an Heir of Heaven ; and we are bound to love him as a brother, and use him accordingly, in all due Offices of Love. And because the Church, into which Baptism entereth us, consists of Christian Pastors and People, Apostles and Prophets, having been as *Foundations*, infallibly delivering us, now recorded in Scripture the Word of Life ; and ordinary Pastors being appointed to *teach*, and *guide* the people in *holy Doctrine, Worship, and Conversation* ; therefore it is implied, that the baptized person at Age,

understandeth this, and consenteth thereunto; that is, to receive, as infallible, the recorded sacred Doctrine of the infallible persons, Apostles and Prophets, and the ordinary Ministry of such ordinary Pastors and Teachers, as he shall discern to be set over him by the Word and Spirit of Christ. Whether this consent to the Pastoral-Office, be necessary to the *Being* of a *Christian*, or only to the *Well-being*, is a controversie with which I need not stop, or lengthen this account. But Baptism, as such, doth not enter us into any *particular Church*.

II. 1. Christ (by himself, and his spirit in the Apostles) hath ordained, that Christians shall be associated into particular Churches, consisting of the aforesaid Ordinary Pastors and their Flocks, for *Personal Communion* in holy Doctrine, Worship, and Conversation; in all which these Pastors are their Guides, according to the *Laws, or Word of Christ, already delivered* by the infallible Ministry of the Apostles and Prophets; *against, or beyond* which, Christ hath given them no power. Their Office is of his own making, and describing; and their power to determine undetermined useful circumstances in Gods Worship, and Church-discipline, is but a power to obey Christs general commands (to do all things in Love, Peace, Order, Decency, and to Edification), which they may not violate.

2. Every Christian that hath opportunity, should be a Member of some such particular Church; Statedly, if it may be; if not, yet *transiently*: But some may want such opportunity (as single persons converted, or cast among Infidels; Travellers, Embassadors, Factors, and other Merchants, (among Infidels) or where Christianity is so corrupted by the Pastors, as that they will not allow men Communion without sinful Oaths, Covenants, Professions, Words, or Practices.

3. No one at Age can be a Member of the Universal, or of any *particular Church* (and so the Subject of that Pastor) *against his will, or without his own consent* (however Antecedent Obligations may bind men to consent).

4. Every such Church should have its proper Bishop; and in *Ignatius's* time, its Unity was described by *One Altar, and One Bishop, with his fellow Presbyters, and Deacons*.

5. Such Bishops, or Pastors were to be ordained by Senior Bishops, or Pastors, and received by the Election, or Consent of the whole Church; and for many hundred years no Churches

ches received their Bishops on any other terms. The *Ordainers*, and the *People* or *Church* receiving him, having each a necessary consent, as a double Key for the security of the Church; to which afterwards the Christian Magistrates consent was added according to Gods word, so far as protecting and countenancing of the Bishop did require. The *senior* Bishops must consent to his *Ordination*, the people must consent to him as formally related to themselves as their *Pastor*; and the Magistrate as to one to be protected by him.

6 As without *mutual consent* the relation of Pastor and flock is not founded; so *Gods Providence* must direct every man to know what particular Church he should be of, and whom by consent to take for the guide of his soul. In *England* men may freely chuse what Church and Pastor they will stand related to; every man having liberty to dwell in what Parish or Diocese he please, without asking leave of the Bishop to remove.

7. The individuating or distinguishing of *particular Churches* by peculiar Circuits, or proper spaces of ground, is no further of Gods institution, than it is the performance of the general commands of doing all in order to *edification, &c.* And as in prosperous times under godly peaceable Princes, it is greatly convenient and desirable; so in several cases of Division, Church-corruption by Heresie, or Tyranny, Persecution, &c. it is inconvenient, and it becomes a necessary duty to gather Churches in the same space of ground where only some other Pastor had a Church before. The cases in which this is lawful, and the cases in which Separation is unlawful, having written largely in another paper, I shall offer it to you when you desire it.

8. It is not of absolute necessity that all the members of a particular Church, do always or usually meet in one place, (though it be very convenient and desirable where it may be done); for Persecution may prohibit it, or want of a large capacious place, or the great distance of some of the Inhabitants, or the age, or weakness of others; and therefore in the ancient Churches, though at first they usually were all assembled in one place, yet after when they encreased, the Canons required all the people to assemble with the Bishop but at certain chief Festivals in the year, having Chappels or Oratories in the Villages where they met on other days. And with us many Parishes of great extent have many Chappels of ease.

9. But that the end of the Association be not only for *distant* communion by *Delegates* or *Letters*, or meer relation to one common Ruler as all the Empire had to the Emperour, but for *PERSONAL COMMUNION* of Pastor and Flock, so that they may at least *per vices* meet together, or live within the reach of each others personal notice, and converse, and Communion in Doctrine, Worship and Discipline, this is essential to a *particular Church*, *primi ordinis*, of Divine Institution, of which I now treat.

III. 1. As Christians must gather into particular Churches, under their proper Bishops; so *these Churches* must hold a certain Communion among themselves, so much as is necessary to their mutual Edification and Preservation, of which Synods, and Communicatory Letters and Messengers, are the means.

2. An association of several Churches for *Communion of Churches*, doth *tota specie* differ from an association of individual Christians into one Church *primæ speciei*. And it differeth in the *matter*, *end*, and kind of Communion.

3. If these several Churches agree in the same Baptismal Covenant, in the same ancient *Creed* or *Articles of Faith*, and in the same love and holy desires summed up by Christ in the Lords-prayer, and in taking the commands of Christ for the Rule of their conversation, and receiving *Gods Revelations* recorded in the holy Scriptures so far as they understand them, renouncing all contraries to any of this so soon as they perceive them so to be, this should suffice to their loving and comfortable communion, without any desires of Domination or Government over one another. And though I will not do any thing unpeaceably against Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archbishops or Bishops, if they govern according to the Laws of God; yet I know no Divine right that any of them have to be the Rulers of the particular Bishops and Churches. Though a humane presidency for order we deny not, nor that *junior* Bishops do owe some respect and submission to the Seniors.

4. Though the *General Laws of Christ* (for concord, edification, &c.) do enable Magistrates by command, or Pastors by contract to chuse and make new Officers of their own (which God

never particularly instituted) for the determining and executing such *circumstantial*s as God hath left to humane prudence, (as *Presidents, Moderators, Churchwardens, Summoners, &c.*) yet I deny, 1. That any Officer of *meer humane Institution* hath a superior proper Ecclesiastical *Power of the Keys*, to be a *Bishop of Bishops*, and to govern the Governours of the particular Churches by Excommunications, Depositions, and Absolutions, seeing *ex ratione rei*, it belongeth to the same Legislator, who instituted the *inferiour order*, to have instituted the *Superiour*, if he would have had it. 2. And I peremptorily deny that any such pretended Superiour (Patriarch, Primate, Metropolitan, Archbishop, &c.) hath any power (save Diabolical) to deprive any *particular Churches, Bishops, or Christians*, of any of the *Priviledges* settled on them by *Christs Universal Laws*, or to disoblige them from any duties required by Christ.

IV. It belongeth to the Office of Princes and Magistrates only to Rule all, both Clergy and Laity, by the *sword or force*; even to drive Ministers to do their certain duty, and to punish them for sin. And they are to keep peace among the Churches; and (as bad as the Secular Powers have been) had they not kept peace better than the Bishops have done, I am possist with horror to think what a field of blood the Churches had been throughout the world, since the Exaltation of the Clergy.

V. Christ only is (as the Universal Legislator, so) the Universal final Judg, from whom there is no appeal.

VI. Every Christian as a Rational Agent hath a Judgment of discerning, by which he must judg whether his Rulers commands be according to Christs commands or not. And if they be, must obey Christ in them. If not, must not obey them against Christ, but appeal to him. And if any do this erroneously, it is his sin; if justly, it is his duty.

These six Particulars I take to be the sufficient means which Christ hath appointed for the concord of the Church; and that the seven points of Concord mentioned by the Apostle should satisfie us herein, *viz.* 1. One body. 2. One Spirit. 3. One hope of our calling. 4. One Lord. 5. One Faith. 6. One Baptism. 7. One God and Father of all. And they that agree in these, are bound to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; as knowing that the Kingdom of God consisteth not in meats and drinks, but in Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

And

And he that in these serveth Christ, is acceptable to God, and (should be) approved of men, *Rom.* 14. 17, 18. *Ephes.* 4. 6, 7, &c. Nor is it lawful for any to hate, persecute, silence, or Excommunicate their Brethren that agree in these; or to divide, distract, or confound the Churches for the interest of their several Preeminences, or Provinces, which have no higher than humane authority, perhaps questionable, at least unquestionably below the authority of God, and null when it is *against* it.

I am sure by the Church-History of all ages since Christ, the great divider of the Christian World hath been the *Pride* of a worldly (too ignorant) Clergy.

1. Striving who should be greatest.
2. Striving about ambiguous words.
3. Imposing unnecessary things by their Authority upon the Churches; to be ignorant of this, is impossible to me when once I have read the History of the Church; which warneth me what to suspect as the causes of our distractions; for the things that had been, are.

And how unexcusable these three evils are, and how contrary to Christ, these Texts do tell me: I. *Luk.* 22. 24, 25, 26. I *Pet.* 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. I *Cor.* 3. 5, 6, 7, 22. 2 *Cor.* 1. 24. II. 2 *Tim.* 2. 14, 16, 23, 24, 25. I *Tim.* 1. 4, 5, 6. III. 2 *Cor.* 11. 3. *Act.* 15. 28. *Revel.* 2. 24, 25. *Mat.* 15. 8, 9. *Rom.* 14. & 15, throughout.

To tell you, that I am not only as you say, on the destructive part, I have thus told you briefly what I assert as the way to peace. And now I shall destructively tell you why I differ from your Principles as truly destructive of truth, unity and peace.

Some of the Principles which I have heard from your mouth, which I dissent from, are these:

I. That the Church must have some Ecclesiastical Governours that are absolute, from whom no man may appeal to an invisible Power.

II. That Diocesan Churches are the first in order of Divine Institution.

III. That Diocesan Bishops by consent may make other Church-forms, as National, Patriarchal, &c. And that such Churches are not made by Princes, but by the consent of Prelates.

IV. That these Church-forms of mans making, stand in a Governing